



NEWSLETTER #2

January 2013

Planning Session Update

You can throw snow, rain, spring temperatures or the traditional Canadian cold day at us, but nothing stops a Science - Literacy Network day! Thanks to everyone for making it to your respective sessions even with all the crazy weather last week. For those that couldn't make it, we missed you and are already looking forward to the end of February. In the meantime, here's a summary of the planning session day and some tips to help you refine your inquiry question.

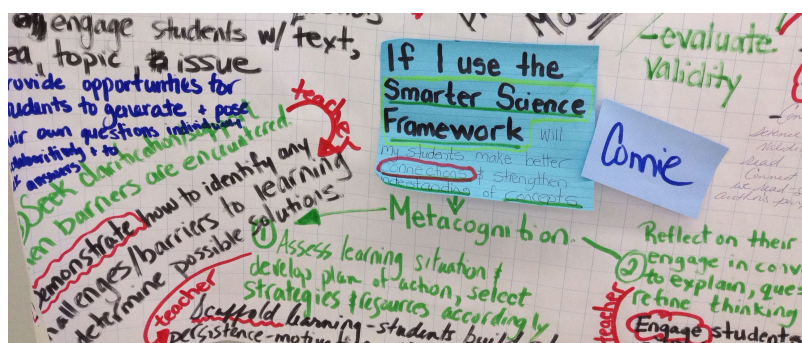
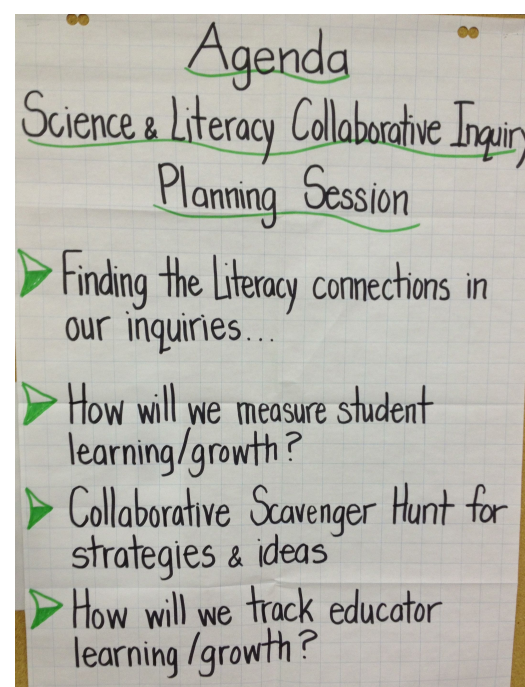
Focusing Your Inquiry Question

As we read through the submitted questions it was clear that there were many good ideas for our various collaborative inquiries. Whether you had a literacy focus or a science focus the thought put into the task energized both of us. Thanks for getting the draft version in. We have been able to comment on each question and provide some guidance.

At the same time, most of the questions need to be tightened up and focused. During the planning sessions we used three or four different filters to relook at the inquiry question or statement. The agenda in the figure to the right shows those four lenses. Those filters were:

- Literacy
- Measurement
- Relevant Strategies
- Tracking Educator Learning

For all three sessions we covered the first two items and the last one. As we worked through the filters, folks had time to brainstorm how the filter could focus their question. The image below is an example of this process.



TO DO

As you read through the newsletter consider the lenses being discussed and apply them to your question. Also consider the feedback from Sandra and Lionel as you "tighten up" and focus your inquiry question.

Adolescent Literacy Guide

TO REVIEW

Using your Inquiry question as a guide, review the five components of the adolescent framework and identify which literacy components relate to your question. Then review the "At a Glance" student indicators and teacher practices (pages 56-57).

Produced by the Ministry of Education through EduGAINS, Sandra was able to find enough copies for our collaborative learning teams. This valuable resource is focused on adolescent literacy. There are two key ideas we pulled from the document over the week: the vision and the components.

Vision

The vision is represented in the graphic below. Working from the outside inwards, the outer blue ring represent the three abilities student develop to be equipped with the literacy skills to be critical and creative thinkers, effective meaning makers, communicators, collaborators and innovative problem solvers.

The thicker purple ring surrounding the adolescent learner are the five components of adolescent literacy.

The Five Components

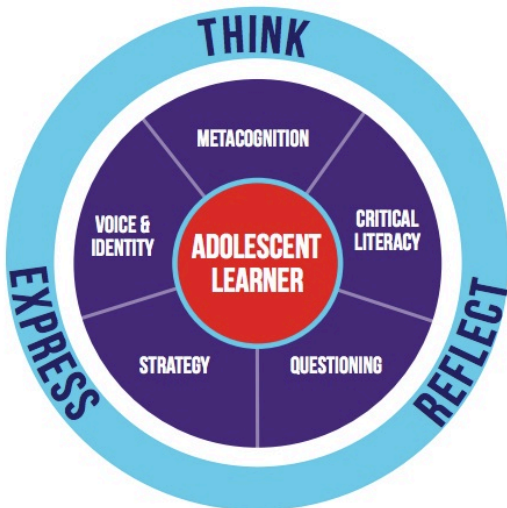
Critical Literacy refers to students critically analyzing and evaluating the meaning of text as it relates to issues of equity, power, and social justice to inform a critical stance, response and/or action.

Metacognition refers to students taking active control over their thinking processes so that they understand themselves as learners, they understand a given task, and they understand a variety of strategies and how to use them in a variety of situations.

Questioning refers to students' curiosity, exploration, and inquiry to evoke, expose and extend their thinking.

Strategy refers to students purposefully selecting and using techniques and processes in order to construct and communicate meaning.

Voice and Identity refers to students' decisions, choices and actions that advocate for their learning and make connections to their experience, values, culture, and interests.



The Adolescent Literacy Framework

What Will We Measure?

Measurement is an aspect of the collaborative inquiry process we will revisit in the third session, but for this week we considered three aspects of data and discussed what we can gather to analyse and interpret as evidence of student learning.

Pre and Post Assessments

Consider using this method when you're looking to track growth over a period of time. Administering the same measurement instrument before and after your inquiry gives you information on student growth during that time.

Monitoring Progress with Data

Collect a variety of data or artefacts that represent student understanding along the way. This can form the foundation for analysis of student performance and supports your professional judgement; allowing you to make refinements as necessary to your teaching.

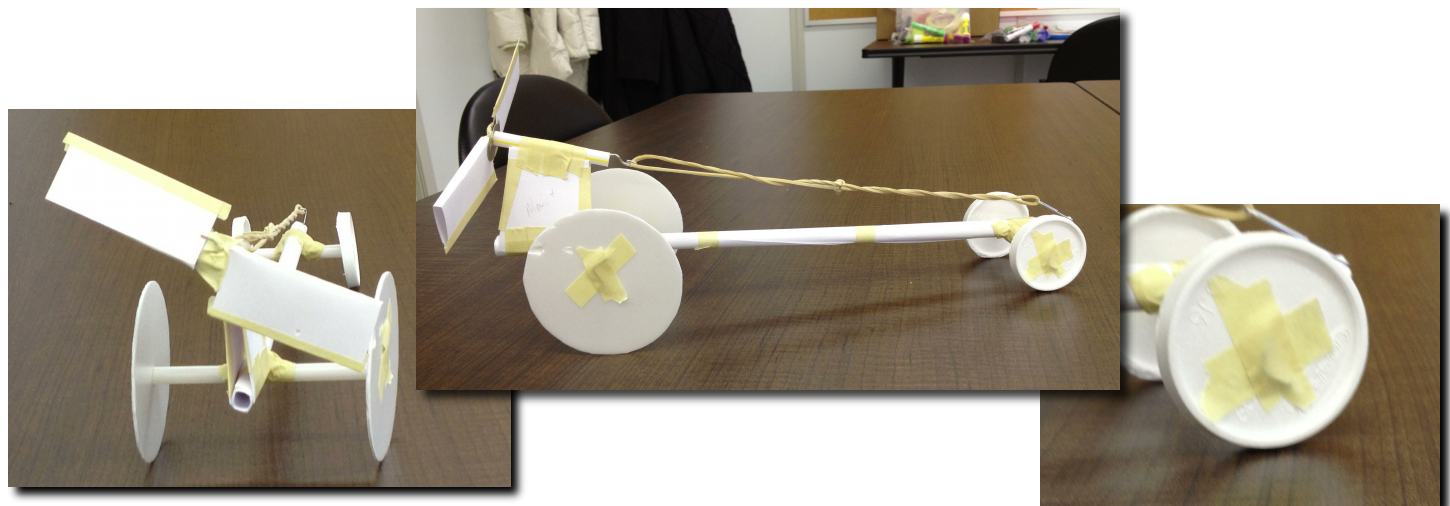
Triangulation

Student products combined with your observations of and conversations with students provide a strong body of evidence for analyzing student performance over a period of time.

The Lou Vee Air Car

The Lou Vee Air Car was an technological, problem solving based activity. Using paper, straws, paper clips, tape and rubber bands a car that is propelled by a rubber band was created. The images below show a finished car as well as modifications to both wheels and propellers done by the groups. This was a challenge that required a range of habits of mind, including perseverance, to complete.

In the debriefing, we noted there are many aspects to this project that could be used for measurement. The final product, the car, being only one of them. Both skill and attitudinal development can be observed and recorded as the cars are being built.



Monitoring Your Learning

A key aspect of collaborative learning is to record, reflect and modify your practice as you work through your inquiry. We have found that this may be one of the most powerful actions we can take to improve our professional repertoire. At the next session we will talk about what the final report for your inquiry will require. One key component is tracking your learning as you investigate. This week we introduced the RAN chart. RAN stands for Reading and Analyzing Non-fiction Strategy.

This five column chart, below, provides a nice framework to record your reflections. Starting with What I think I know you are prompted to confirm your thinking or identify the misconception that disproved what you thought you knew. After reflecting and investigating this misconception, new learning arise. Finally, based on this new understanding, what new wonderings have emerged.

One strategy brought forward by Sandra was to write your What I think I know statements on Post-It Notes. Then, as you work through the chart, just move the Note to the appropriate column and add additional thoughts.

A template for the chart can be found on the wiki.

Reading and Analyzing Non-fiction Strategy (RAN Strategy)

Based on research by Tony Stead

TIP: Always work horizontally across the chart.



| What I think I know | Confirmed | Misconceptions | New Learning | Wonderings |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Select a non-fiction text as the focus of discussion. Model for students how to record the information they think to be correct about the topic, or part of the text read. | Read the text in sections and have students confirm prior knowledge. Move prior knowledge confirmed into this section. | Ask students to identify information that has been disproved from their identified prior knowledge. Move this information into this section. | Have students locate information not stated in prior knowledge into this section. | Ask students to raise questions based on the new information gathered. See if wonderings can be answered by: ➤ using the table of contents and/or index of |

Final Thoughts

Once again, it's been a great week. Thanks to everyone for coming out and working through the various activities of the day as well as focusing your Inquiry Question or Statement. We are very excited about the next steps in the process and are looking forward to seeing you at the end of the month.

Have a good February and don't eat too much chocolate on Valentines Day!

Sandra and Lionel